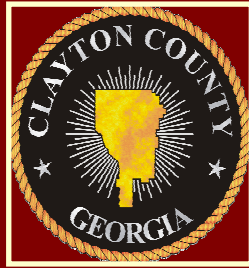


# HAROLD R. BANKE JUSTICE CENTER

SUPERIOR AND STATE COURT ADMINISTRATION  
OF  
CLAYTON COUNTY



## CALENDAR YEAR 2010 ANNUAL REPORT



9151 Tara Boulevard  
Jonesboro, Georgia 30236

*In the Name of Justice: Harold R. Banke Justice Center*

*On the Cover:*

*Left Photograph: Clayton County Superior Court Judges (left to right)  
Judge Albert B. Collier, Chief Judge Deborah C. Benefield (as of January 4, 2011),  
Judge Geronda V. Carter, and former Chief Judge Matthew O. Simmons (January 2007– December 2010)*

*Right Photograph: Clayton County State Court Judges (left to right)  
Judge Morris E. Braswell, Judge John C. Carbo, Judge Linda S. Cowen, and  
Judge Aaron B. Mason  
Not Photographed: Chief Judge Harold G. Benefield*



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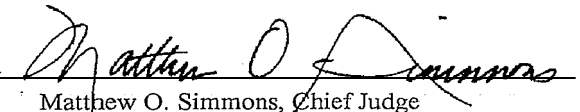


**Message from Superior Court Chief Judge  
Honorable Matthew O. Simmons  
(January 2007– December 2010)**

**Reflecting Back**

It is an honor to share with you the 2010 Annual Report on the work of our courts. It is my hope that the information in this report gives you an idea of the true dedication on behalf of the judges and court staff here at the Justice Center.

It has been my privilege to serve as a Superior Court Judge in Clayton County since 1993. Over that time I have been impressed by the work of my colleagues and our court staff as we strive to handle cases as fairly and efficiently as possible. I believe that our country's judicial system is the best in the world and Clayton County is the home of some of the state's finest judges. We should be proud of the work that our courts are doing as they administer justice for countless citizens. Thanks to the hard work and dedication of the many people involved in the court system, I know we are making a difference.

  
Matthew O. Simmons, Chief Judge



**Message from Superior Court Chief Judge  
Honorable Deborah C. Benefield  
(As of January 4, 2011)**



**The Way Forward**

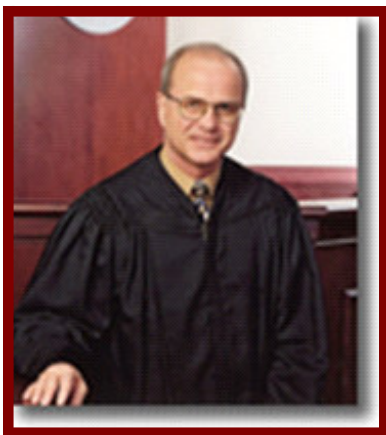
On behalf of the Courts of Clayton County, I am proud to present the 2010 Annual Report outlining the combined efforts of the hardworking courts of this Circuit in the past year. It is my hope that upon reviewing this document, you will understand the dedication of each judge and employee who works tirelessly to ensure that our community remains a safe place to raise children, live peacefully, and operate thriving businesses. I believe that you will also find that the Courts which serve this County run effectively and efficiently.

To many, the numbers in this report are simply statistics to be proud of, or rue over, but we understand that these numbers represent the life of our community. These numbers represent persons arrested, charged with a crime and if found guilty, incarcerated or restrained by the strictures of probation so that we feel safer on our streets and in our homes. They represent the dissolution of families, as well as efforts to ensure that the adults and children of those families are provided for, and hopefully shown ways to separate more harmoniously. They represent businesses that may prosper or close due to difficult decisions made in lawsuits by judges as well as jurors.

We may not be able to open a new community center for your children to play in or clear the snow from the streets after a storm, but we are here to carefully listen and decide some of the most difficult issues in a person's life. We are the courts of your County and exist to serve you.

  
Deborah C. Benefield, Judge





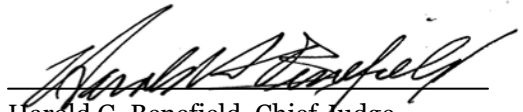
**Message from State Court Chief Judge  
Honorable Harold G. Benefield  
(January 1995– Present)**

**Our Court**

During calendar year 2010, the State Court was forced to deal with the effects of the horrible economic conditions of our Nation and our community. On the civil side of our docket, there were large volumes of actions filed to collect debts owed by people who could not, or at any rate did not pay according to their obligations. This same effect was felt in our criminal courts since there seems to be a direct relationship between crime and economic hardship. As a result of all of this, thousands of trials, motions and other proceedings were scheduled and dealt with as efficiently as possible and always with a view to achieving substantial justice.

We continue to pursue ways to use twenty-first century tools to deal with these cases. The management of information is as great a challenge for the Courts as it is for any other business entity. It is also an equally great opportunity for making the pursuit of justice happen more quickly, more transparently, with greater access to those in need and at less expense to those who must bear the burden of paying for our system of justice.

The judges of this Court will continue to do everything within their legitimate power to provide a serious, caring, ethical, and efficient forum for the resolution of human conflicts.

  
Harold G. Benefield, Chief Judge





# GEORGIA COURT SYSTEM



## Supreme Court



- Limited Jurisdiction Court.
- Appellate jurisdiction over cases of constitutional issue, title to land, validity of construction of wills, habeas corpus, convictions of capital felonies, equity, divorce, alimony, and elections.
- Certified questions and certiorari from Court of Appeals.
- Exclusive jurisdiction over death penalty appeal and habeas corpus writ applications.
- Exclusive jurisdiction over original proceeding habeas corpus and advisory opinion.



## Court of Appeals



- Limited Jurisdiction Court.
- Appellate jurisdiction over trial courts where Supreme Court has no exclusive appellate jurisdiction.
- Criminal and civil appeal by right. Interlocutory appeals for criminal, civil, and administrative agency.
- Criminal, civil, and administrative agency appeal by permission. Interlocutory appeals in criminal, civil, administrative agency.

## Clayton County Superior Court



- Exclusive jurisdiction over felony cases, matters of divorce, domestic relations, title to land, and equity.
- General Jurisdiction: all civil actions, misdemeanors, & appeals from lower circuit courts.
- Jury Trials.
  - Hon. Matthew O. Simmons, Chief Judge
  - Hon. Deborah C. Benefield
  - Hon. Albert B. Collier
  - Hon. Geronda V. Carter



## Clayton County State Court



- Limited jurisdiction.
- Civil law actions including torts, contracts, & civil appeals, except cases in the exclusive jurisdiction of Superior Court.
- Misdemeanors, Traffic, Felony Preliminaries, Jury Trials.
  - Hon. Harold G. Benefield, Chief Judge
  - Hon. John C. Carbo
  - Hon. Linda S. Cowen
  - Hon. Morris E. Braswell
  - Hon. Aaron B. Mason

**Message from Court Administrator  
Matthew A. Sorensen  
(As of January 2011)**



As the recently named court administrator of the Superior and State Courts of the Clayton Judicial Circuit, it is with great pleasure that I present the 2010 annual report. This report reflects countless hours of dedication and service by judges and staff that are committed to making Clayton County better than it already is!

As we move into a new year we face many challenges. We will be required to do more with less. We will face increasing workloads and shrinking resources. The courts will be required, more than ever before, to make wise use of the limited resources available.

The important work the court does cannot stop or even slow down. Our community cannot thrive without the Court and is dependent upon the efficient rule of law working effectively in the daily lives of our citizens.

The Court Administrator's Office is well prepared to build on the successes of 2010 with a talented team of professionals who are committed to public service and understand the importance of the decisions that are made in the courtrooms of the Justice Center each day.

  
Matthew A. Sorensen, Court Administrator





## CUSTOMER SERVICE



During the 2010 calendar year, the Harold R. Banke Justice Center served 436,205 patrons. Our customer service begins when each person enters our doors and continues until each individual matter is resolved. We are committed to providing an accessible, efficient and quality experience for each interested party. This commitment is a part of our professional customer service strategy, which sets out our Court's vision of how we develop relationships throughout the community as we deliver quality customer-focused services. We have developed customer service standards to clearly define the high level of service that our customers can expect when they use our services and facility. In monitoring our performance, we invite our patrons to complete our Access and Fairness Survey, which may be obtained in the Court Administration Office. We welcome feedback on our customer service, your experience in our facility, and any suggestions on how we may improve. Patron concerns are taken into account as we consider innovative program implementations and service enhancements. Accordingly, the Court Administration Office of Clayton County is in full compliance with the National Association for Court Management's 10 Core Competencies.

### National Association for Court Management's 10 Core Competencies

• Purposes and Responsibilities of Courts
• Case flow Management
• Leadership
• Visioning and Strategic Planning
• Essential Components
• Court Community Communication
• Resources, Budget and Finance
• Human Resources Management
• Education, Training and Development
• Information Technology Management

# DEMOGRAPHICAL OVERVIEW



With the support of the Clayton County Court Administration Office, the Superior and State Courts serve 278,143\* county residents, which constitute 2.78% of the State's total population. As a part of the greater metropolitan Atlanta area, our Court also manages cases involving defendants from neighboring counties, the State of Georgia, and beyond as matters arise and fall within our jurisdiction. Located in the 6th Judicial Circuit of Georgia, the Court also handles cases from Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport, the world's busiest airport in terms of passenger traffic, which accommodated 89,331,622\* passengers during 2010. Accordingly, our 9 popularly elected judges continue to manage the steadily increasing caseload, ensuring that all patrons have access to fair, timely, and impartial justice.

\* Hartsfield- Jackson Atlanta International Airport's Year to Date Airport Traffic Report, December 2010.

County Population Increase	
2009-2010	+ 0.86 %*
2008-2009	+ 0.75 %
2007-2008	+ 0.55 %
2006- 2007	+ 0.36 %
2005- 2006	+ 2.65 %

State Population Increase	
2009-2010	+ 1.61 %*
2008-2009	+ 1.48 %
2007-2008	+ 1.47 %
2006- 2007	+ 1.93 %
2005- 2006	+ 3.21 %

Year	Georgia Population	Clayton County Population
2010	9,987,461*	278,143*
2009	9,829,211	275,772
2008	9,685,744	273,718
2007	9,544,750	272,217
2006	9,363,941	271,240
2005	9,072,576	264,231

\*2010 calculations are estimates based upon U.S. Census Bureau statistical trends.

# COUNTY DEMOGRAPHICAL DETAIL

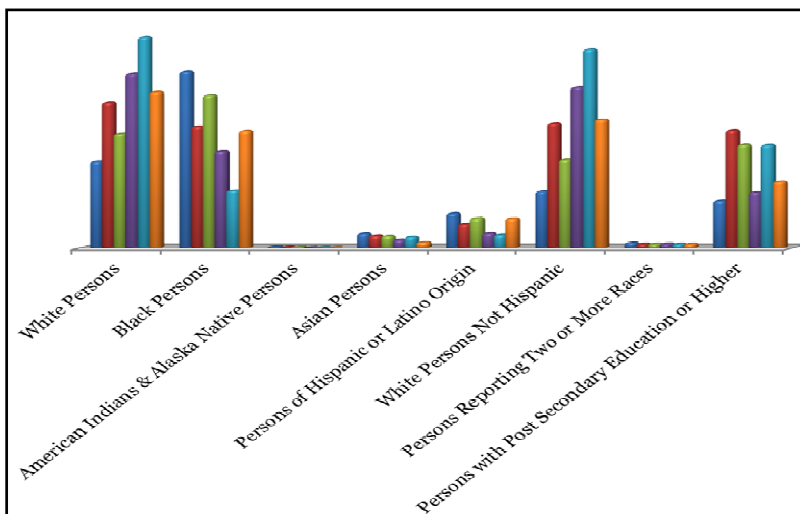


Court Administration recognizes the direct relationship between population expansion, mounting legal infractions, increased case flow, and plummeting local living standards in relation to surrounding counties. Despite statewide economic cutbacks, the Harold R. Banke Justice Center is unwavering in delivering impartial and swift justice due to each patron as we simultaneously exhibit a human sensitivity to a myriad of critical factors affecting the influx of cases in the judicial workload. Such factors necessitate innovative solutions that strategically manage available resources and services offered to court patrons.

In comparison to neighboring counties, Clayton County pioneers in maintaining the greatest population ratios of diversity in terms of minority citizens in each category specified by the U.S. Census Bureau. Along with this diversity, Clayton County is also the 2<sup>nd</sup> most densely populated county with respect to land mass, trailing DeKalb County. In the most challenging demographic concerns, our citizens also endure the lowest median household income, which correlates to a population possessing the fewest citizens with formal post secondary, or higher education. These burgeoning economic conditions are evident throughout our criminal justice system as observed in arrest rates and increased scheduled court sessions.

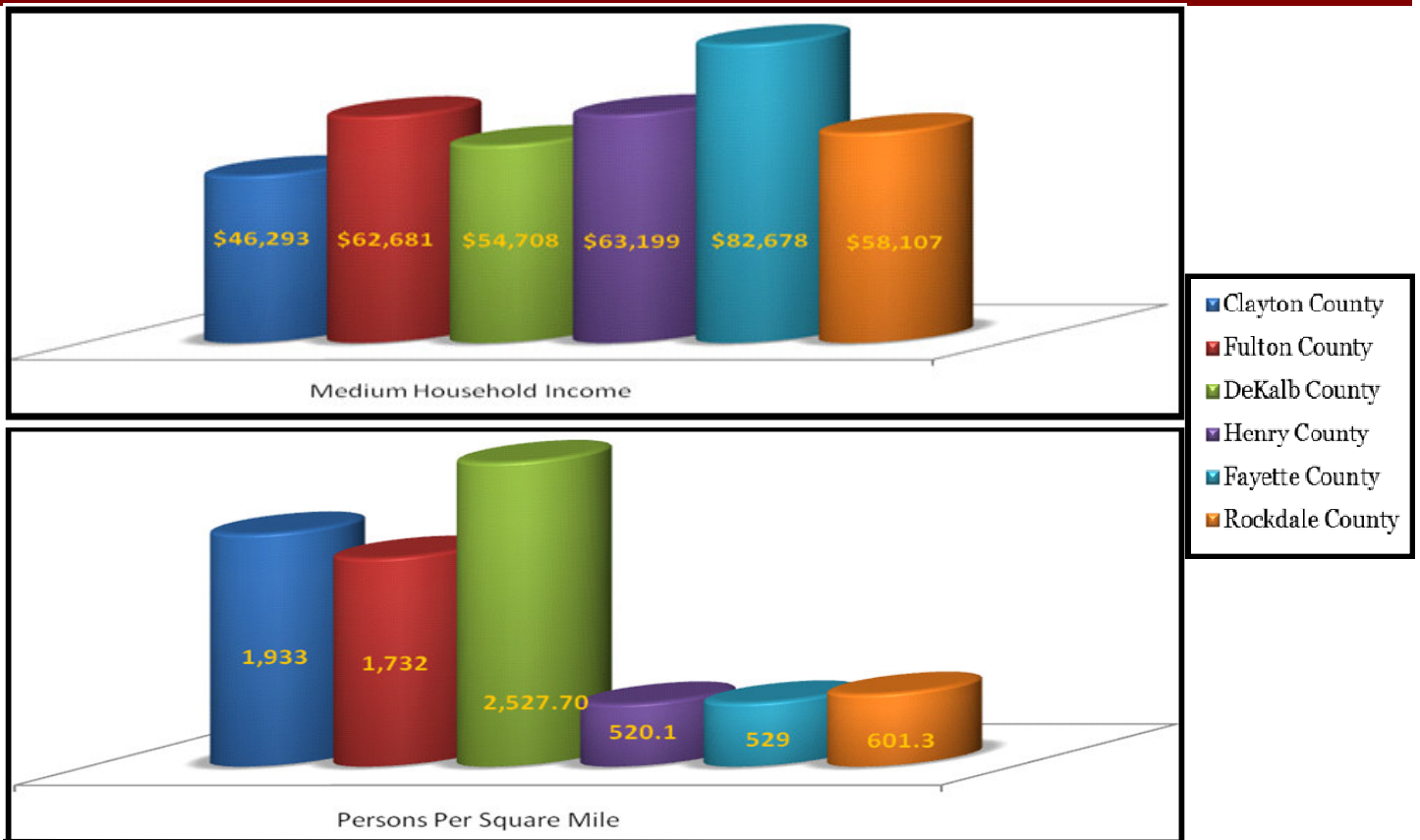
## Population Percentages

	Clayton County	Fulton County	DeKalb County	Henry County	Fayette County	Rockdale County
White Persons	30.4	51.2	40.2	61.3	74.2	54.9
Black Persons	62.1	42.7	53.7	34.0	20.2	41.2
American Indian & Alaska Native Persons	0.5	0.4	0.4	0.2	0.3	0.3
Asian Persons	5.0	4.3	4.2	2.9	3.9	2.0
Persons of Hispanic or Latino Origin	12.2	8.3	10.4	5.1	4.6	10.3
White Persons Not Hispanic	19.9	43.8	31.0	56.6	69.9	45.1
Persons Reporting Two or More Races	1.8	1.4	1.4	1.5	1.4	1.4
Persons with Post Secondary Education	16.6	41.4	36.3	19.5	36.2	23.4



The workload is subject to demographical fluctuations beyond the Court's control. As the county population and crime rates increase and diversify, the Court anticipates the need for additional resources in order to support services and programs for patrons to enjoy service in a timely, efficient, and professional manner.

## COUNTY DEMOGRAPHICAL DETAIL continued



\* Statistics provided by U. S. Census Bureau

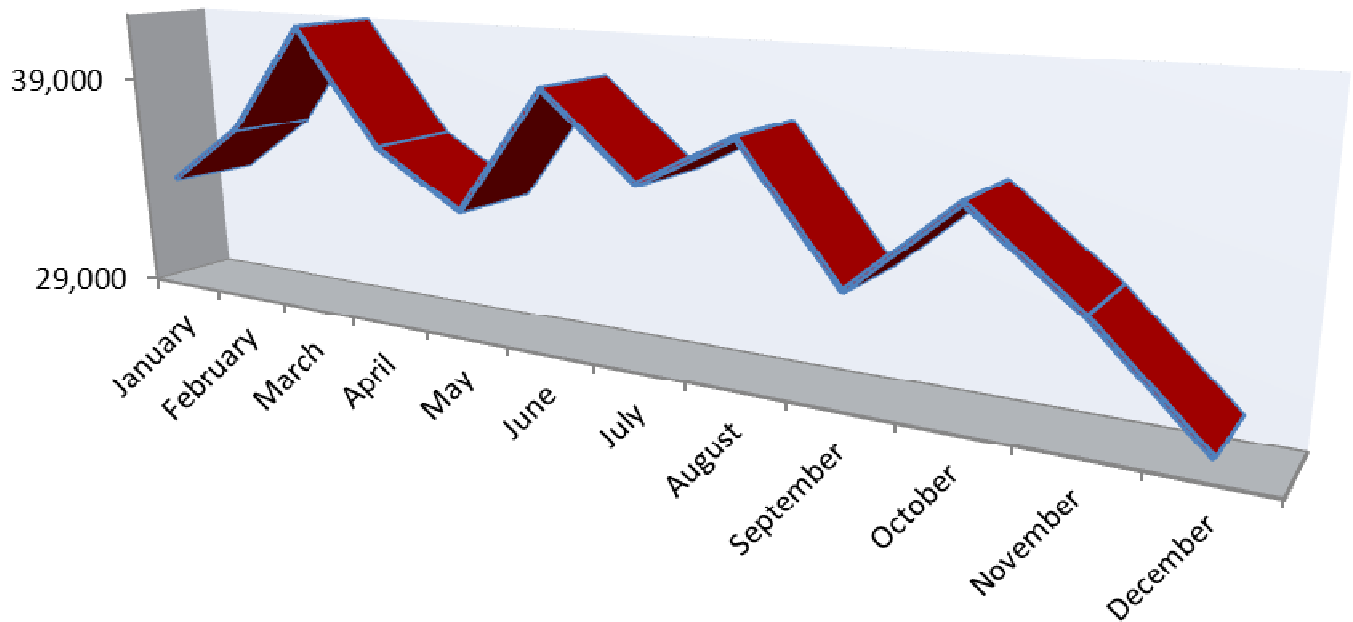
### County Municipalities

- Bonanza (unincorporated)
- College Park (part)
- Conley (unincorporated)
- Ellenwood (unincorporated)
- Forest Park
- Irondale (unincorporated)
- Lake City
- Jonesboro
- Lovejoy
- Morrow
- Rex (unincorporated)
- Riverdale

## JUSTICE CENTER PATRON FLOW



	Patron Meter
January	34,389
February	37,096
March	42,007
April	37,010
May	34,692
June	40,172
July	36,751
August	38,945
September	33,685
October	37,462
November	34,074
December	29,922
Total	436,205



## SUPERIOR COURT JUDGES



**Honorable Chief Judge Matthew O. Simmons** has served Clayton County as a superior court judge since 1992, sitting as Chief Judge since January 1, 2007. He is a lifelong resident of Clayton County, having attended Forest Park High School and the University of Georgia, where he earned a Masters of Law degree in Taxation. Chief Judge Simmons practiced law in Clayton County from 1979-1992, served as a City Councilman in Forest Park from 1983- 1986, and was elected the youngest mayor in the history of the city at age 30, serving in that capacity from 1987-1991. He was named Region Judge of the Year by the Office of Child Support Services in 2008 and honored in *Atlanta Business Chronicle's* "Who's Who in Law" in 2008 and 2009. In 2010, the Judicial Nominating Commission named Judge Simmons on the short list of qualified candidates to serve in the Georgia Court of Appeals. He has faithfully served Clayton County for 18 years.



**Honorable Deborah C. Benefield** is a native Atlantan, residing in the southeast her entire life. She was initially elected to Clayton County Superior Court in 1993, becoming the county's first female trial judge of a court with general jurisdiction. Judge Benefield holds a B.A. degree in History from Spring Hill College and a law degree from the University of Georgia. In 1984, she became Clayton County's first female assistant solicitor and after one year, began serving as assistant district attorney, a position she held until December 1992. During her years in the District Attorney's Office, Judge Benefield prosecuted all of Clayton County's child molestation and cruelty to children cases. She also helped design the county's child abuse protocol. Judge Benefield has successfully promoted legislation concerning domestic violence and also coaches the Jonesboro High School Mock Trial Team, winner of two national championships. Judge Benefield has served Clayton County for 18 years and was appointed to serve as Superior Court Chief Judge as of January 2011.



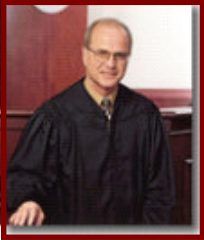
**Honorable Albert B. Collier** has been a county resident since 1966, and has served as Superior Court Judge since 1999. He also served the county Juvenile system as Probation Officer from 1976-1983, the District Attorney's Office as Assistant District Attorney from 1983-1998, and Clayton State College and University as Adjunct Professor of Criminal Law. Judge Collier is a graduate of Forest Park High School and an alumnus of Valdosta State College, holding a B.S. in Sociology and two degrees from Woodrow Wilson College of Law— a J.D. and a Master of Laws in Litigation. In addition to managing his routine court calendar, Judge Collier also presides over the Clayton County Adult Felony Drug Court, serves as Deacon and choir member at First Baptist Church of Jonesboro, sits as Paralegal Studies Advisory Committee member at Clayton College and State University, and is an active member of the Marriage and Family Initiative. Judge Collier is also a family patriarch, married since 1979 and the proud father of three. He has served Clayton County for 12 years.



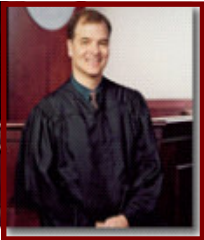
**Honorable Geronda V. Carter** was elected to the Superior Court Bench of the Clayton Judicial Circuit in 2006. Prior to her election to Superior Court, she served as the Presiding Magistrate Judge as well as a Designated Superior Court Judge by appointment. She has received judicial education from the National Judicial College, Northwestern University School of Law, and the Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America. Judge Carter also served as Special Assistant United States Attorney for the Northern District of Georgia and Assistant Regional Counsel for the Social Security Administration. She obtained her law degree from the University of Miami School of Law after earning a B.A. with honors in Psychology from Spelman College. Judge Carter has served Clayton County for 5 years.



## STATE COURT JUDGES



**Honorable Chief Judge Harold G. Benefield** is a lifelong resident of Clayton County. His judgeship was appointed by Gov. Joe Frank Harris in March 1983 after working as an assistant district attorney, criminal defense attorney, and general practitioner. Chief Judge Benefield has also served on the Georgia Courts Automation Commission as a faculty member of the Institute for Continuing Judicial Education, as well as a Master Attorney in the Bleckley Inn of Court. He has served State Court as Chief Judge since 1995 and Clayton County for the past 28 years.



**Honorable John C. Carbo, III** is a lifetime Clayton County resident. Holding a B.A. from the University of Georgia and a J.D. from Mercer University, Judge Carbo practiced law in the private sector for four years prior to being appointed to the first full-time Solicitor General position in 1983. In July 1988, he was appointed to a newly created State Court Judge's position, and continues to serve in that position today. Judge Carbo has volunteered as Attorney Coach for the Jonesboro High School Mock Trial Team for the past 12 years and his teams have won several State Championships and were named National Champions in 2007 & 2008. During his 23 years of service to Clayton County, Judge Carbo has mentored many young attorneys and fellow members of the bench. He has been married for 33 years and has two children.



**Honorable Linda S. Cowen** is a Georgia native holding an A.A. from Clayton Junior College in Legal Secretarial Studies, and two degrees from the University of Georgia: a B.S. in Business Administration and a J.D., *Cum Laude*. Judge Cowen has 10 years of private practice experience and 22 years of judicial experience, adjudicating part time in Magistrate Court from 1989-1995, as a fill-in Judge for Juvenile Court from 1989-1995, and State Court since 1995. In addition to serving as DUI/Drug Court Judge since 2006, Judge Cowen also presides over the Regional and State competitions of the National and Georgia High School Mock Trial Programs, is treasurer for the Executive Committee for Council of State Court Judges, appointed to the Board at Large of The Joseph Sams School, and participates in various committees for the Council of State Court Judges. Judge Cowen has been married since 1982 and is the mother of two, serving Clayton County for 16 years.



**Honorable Morris E. Braswell** is the son of a Methodist Minister and a graduate of Monroe Area High School, West Georgia College, Georgia State University, and John Marshall School of Law. A resident of Clayton County since 1974, Judge Braswell began practicing law in Jonesboro in 1978. In 1996, he was elected to the Clayton County State Court and currently serves on the Board of Directors for Calvary Refuge Center in Forest Park. He also serves as Chairman for the Tara District and chairs the Tara District Board of Review for the Boy Scouts of America. Since 1984, he has been a member of St. Augustine's Episcopal Church. Judge Braswell has served Clayton County for 14 years.



**Honorable Aaron B. Mason** holds a B.A. in Political Science from the University of Kentucky and a J.D. from Emory University School of Law. A Georgia resident since 1993, Judge Mason was named the first African American prosecutor in Clayton County's Solicitor General's office and in August 2010, became the first African American Judge of Clayton County State Court by appointment from Governor Sonny Perdue. Prior to his appointment, Judge Mason prosecuted many multi-defendant and complex cases in Georgia's Attorney General's Office and has successfully defended several State officials in civil rights and tort actions. He has also argued before the Eleventh Circuit Court of Appeals. Judge Mason is a member of Andrew's Chapel United Methodist Church in Jonesboro and is married with two daughters. He has tirelessly served Clayton County for

## ANNUAL PROGRAMS OVERVIEW



As the Harold R. Banke Justice Center continues to evolve to accommodate the needs of our patrons, program innovation and service enhancements remain priority. Throughout 2010, various projects have been pursued with justice, accessibility, and citizens as the most critical factors in designing and implementing our court programs.



**Circuit E-filing** is an ongoing project, planned to expedite the case management process. By providing paperless services, the Court not only becomes a greener environment by preserving documents in digital format, but also provides greater access to the files when requested by Judges, attorneys, and litigants as remote access becomes a viable option through use of Internet. Additionally, as the procedures for e-filing eliminate the need to transport physical case files between courtrooms and court offices, accuracy in record maintenance rises along with processing time.

The video component of e-filing allows for submission of arrest and search warrant applications via the Internet or computer kiosks as officers are able to apply for arrest and search warrants electronically and obtain documents automatically docketed and forwarded to the courts and Sheriff's Office. With e-filing, the Harold R. Banke Justice Center allows law enforcement to return to patrol service immediately and spend more time policing our community rather than waiting to obtain arrest and search warrants. Additionally, e-filing affords the ability for officers to query accurate accounts of outstanding warrants without having to pull individual files to verify each warrant.

**One Day, One Trial Management** is a Court effort designed to alleviate current economic hardships by streamlining juror utilization, potentially saving tens of thousands of dollars per year in avoidable expenses incurred for jurors not actively serving on jury duty. Idle jurors are quickly informed of their duty status and relieved, minimizing lost income and lowered productivity at their places of employment. In effect, hundreds of thousands of dollars are also saved by the Court and the economic progression of local businesses resume with marginal interruption.



**Circuit Court Business Continuity** allows Court Administration to communicate with court staff throughout the Harold R. Banke Justice Center during non-business hours to deliver information regarding the status of operations in the event of emergency.

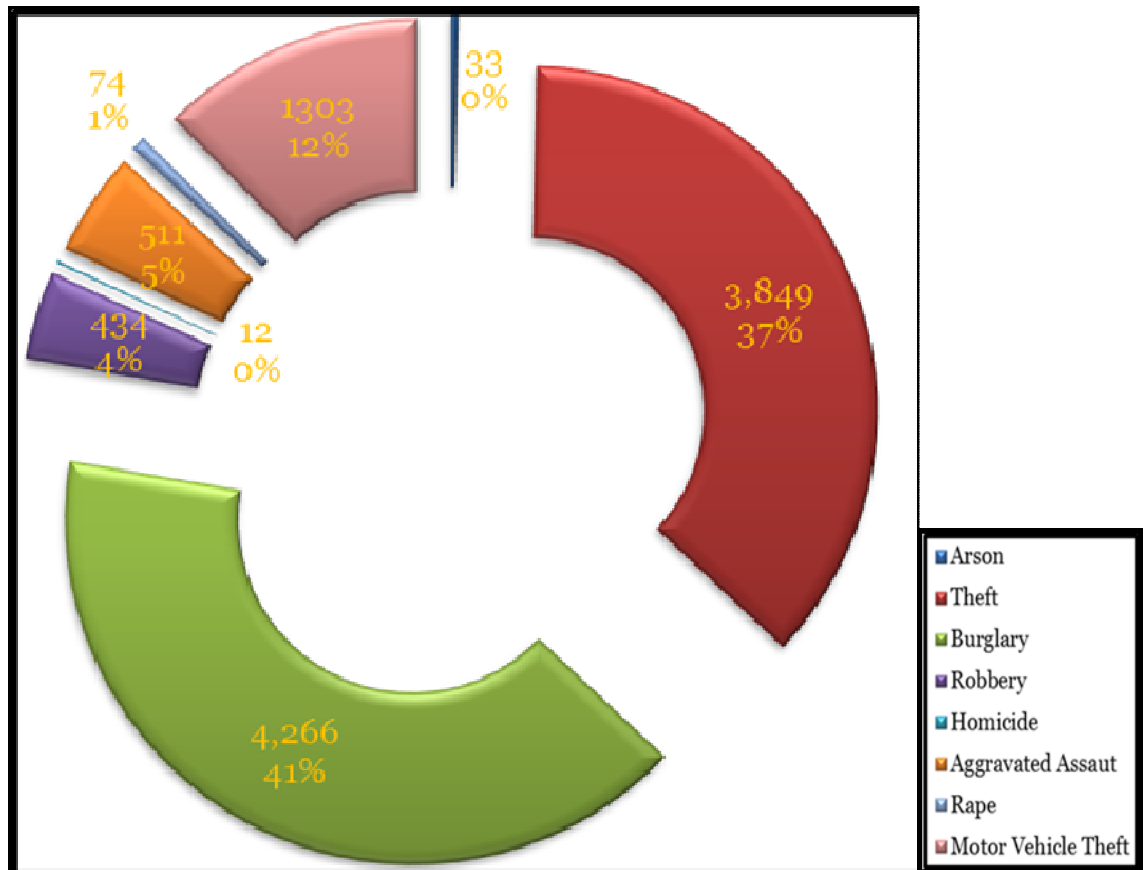
## CRIME RATES EFFECTING CASE FLOW



The apparent relationship between crime rates and court case docket numbers is direct: as the former increases, so does the latter. For this reason, the Office of the Superior and State Court Administration cooperates with Clayton County Police Department in carefully monitoring county crime trends and acts to create programs to address fundamental reasons for criminal commissions and the ever evolving needs of court patrons that we manage on a daily basis. Amidst the current economic decline of our nation, state, and county, we recognize that many crimes are “opportunistic”, those crimes involving theft, robbery, burglary, and arson are correlative to unemployment, underemployment, and loss of stable living conditions. Additionally, those cases including alcohol and drug offenses aggravate the sensitivity of the conditions our patrons face each day. As our Courts confront these issues, we remain unwavering in the administration of justice, accountable as an agency, and accessible to the general public.

### Clayton County Crime Rates

\*Data provided by Clayton County Police Dept.

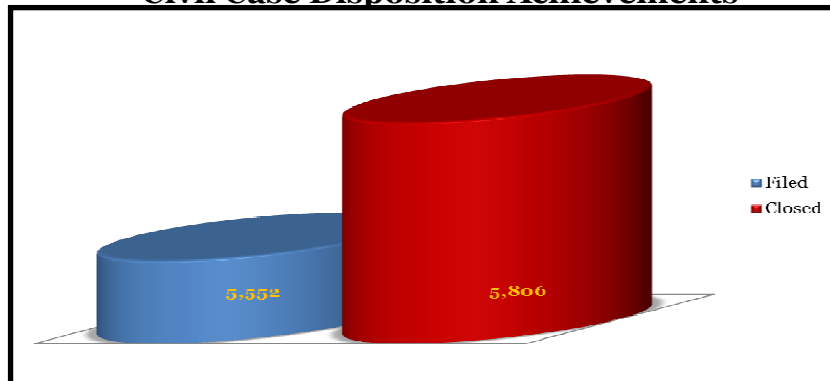


## SUPERIOR COURT CASELOAD



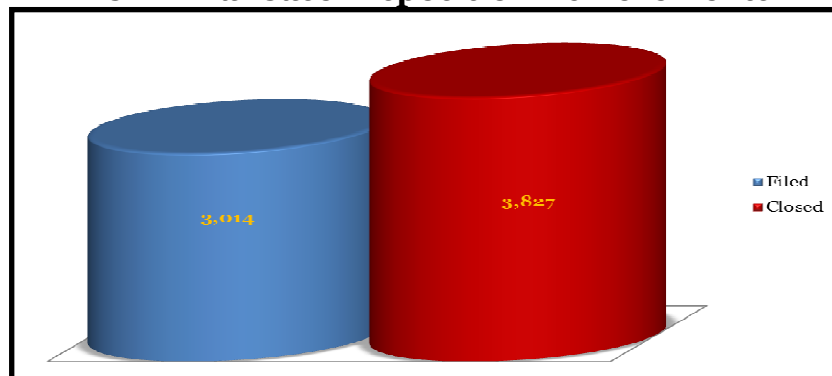
During Calendar year 2010, the Judges of the Superior Court of Clayton County held 125 Jury Trials in addition to court settings concerning matters of law external to the criminal caseload.

### Civil Case Disposition Achievements



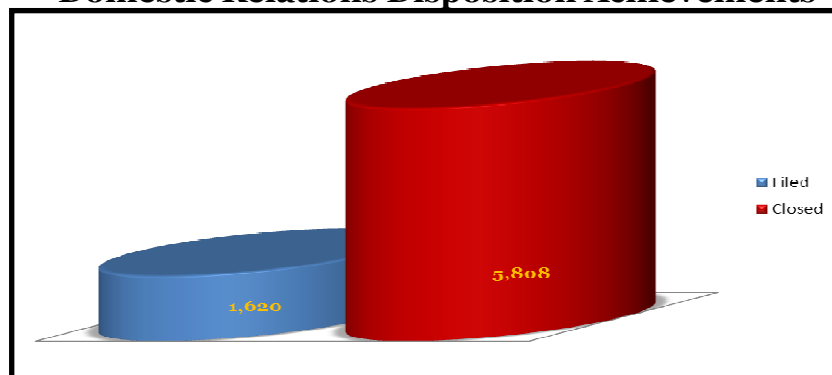
As of January 5, 2011, the Superior Court achieved a disposition rate of 1.05.

### Criminal Case Disposition Achievements



As of January 5, 2011, the Superior Court achieved a disposition rate of 1.27.

### Domestic Relations Disposition Achievements

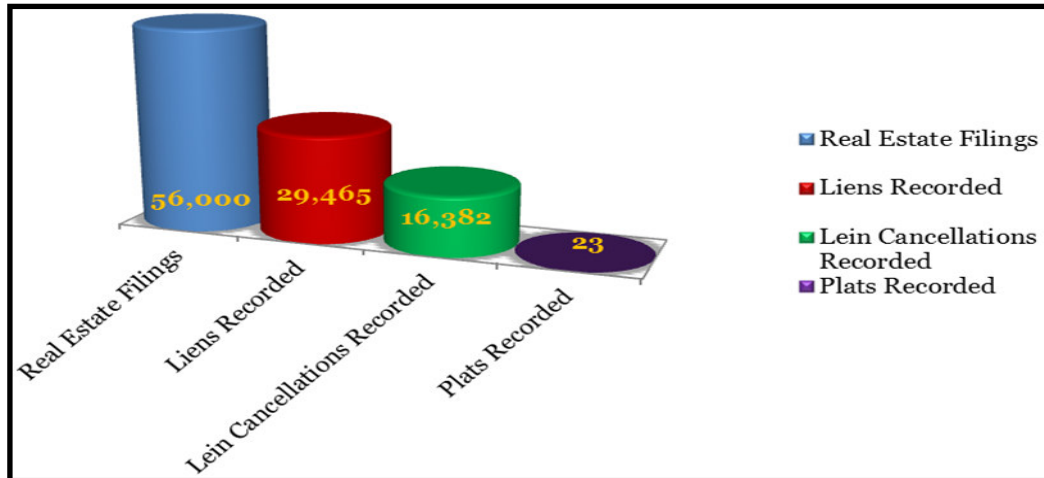


As of January 5, 2011, the Superior Court achieved a disposition rate of 3.59.

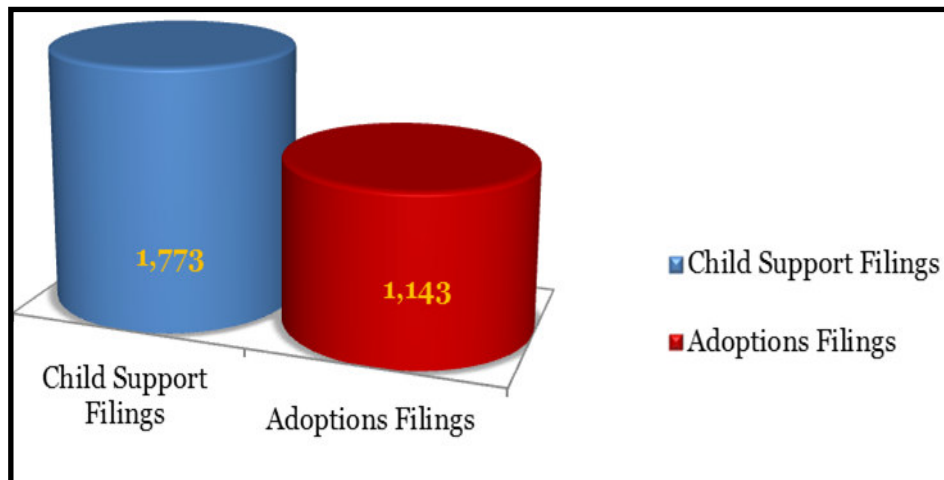
# SUPERIOR COURT CASELOAD continued



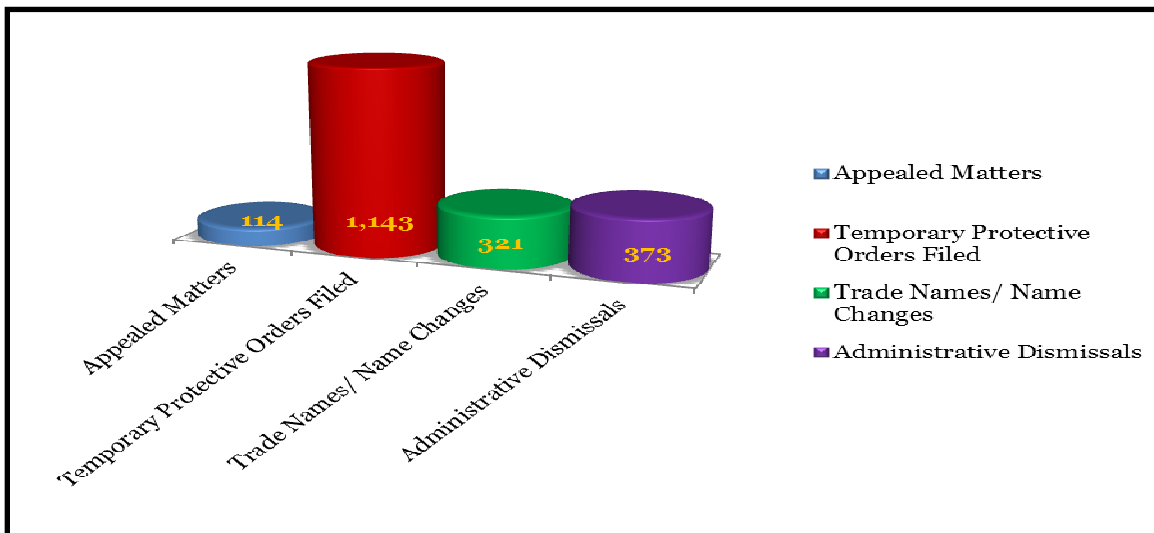
## Property Caseload Details



## Family Caseload Details



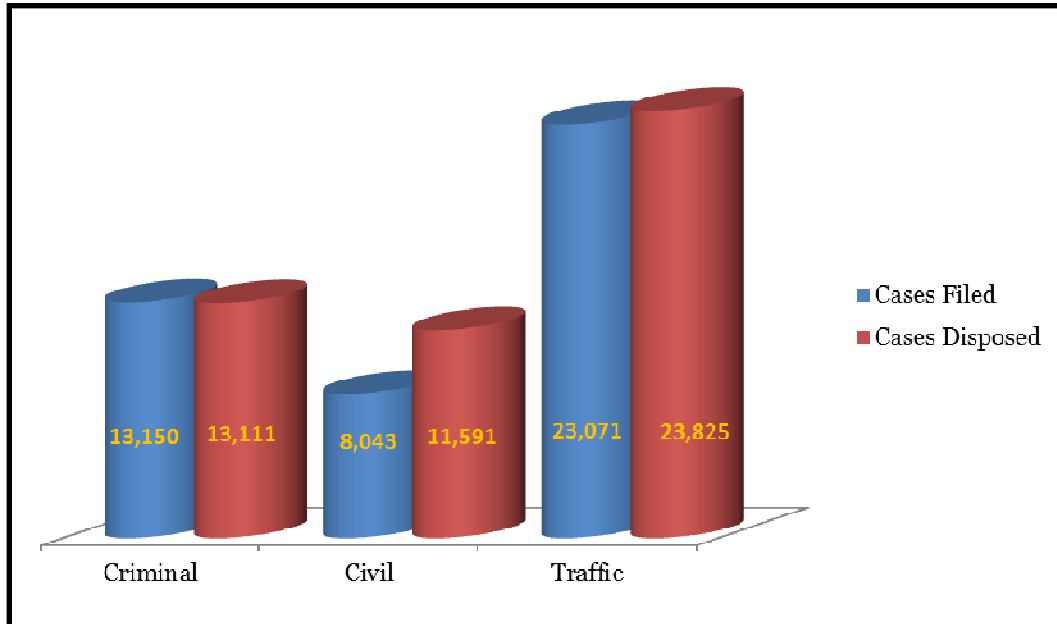
## Other Caseload Details



# STATE COURT CASELOAD



## Case Disposition Achievements



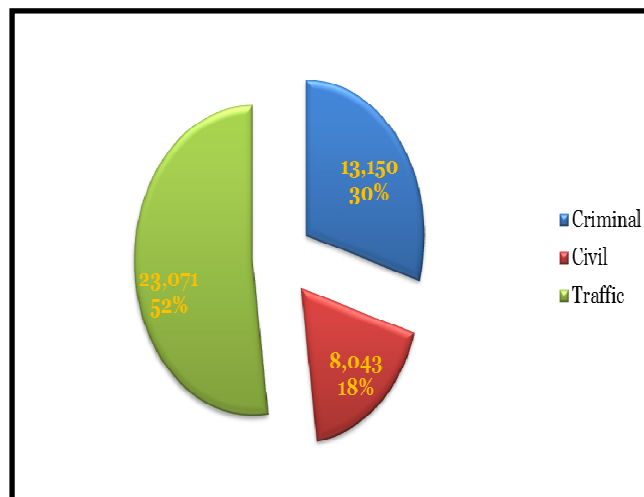
As of January 5, 2011, the State Court criminal caseload achieved a disposition rate of 0.99.

As of January 5, 2011, the State Court civil caseload achieved a disposition rate of 1.44.

As of January 5, 2011, the State Court traffic caseload achieved a disposition rate of 1.03.

## Caseload Details

	Cases Filed	Cases Disposed
Criminal	13,150	13,111
Civil	8,043	11,591
Traffic	23,071	23,825

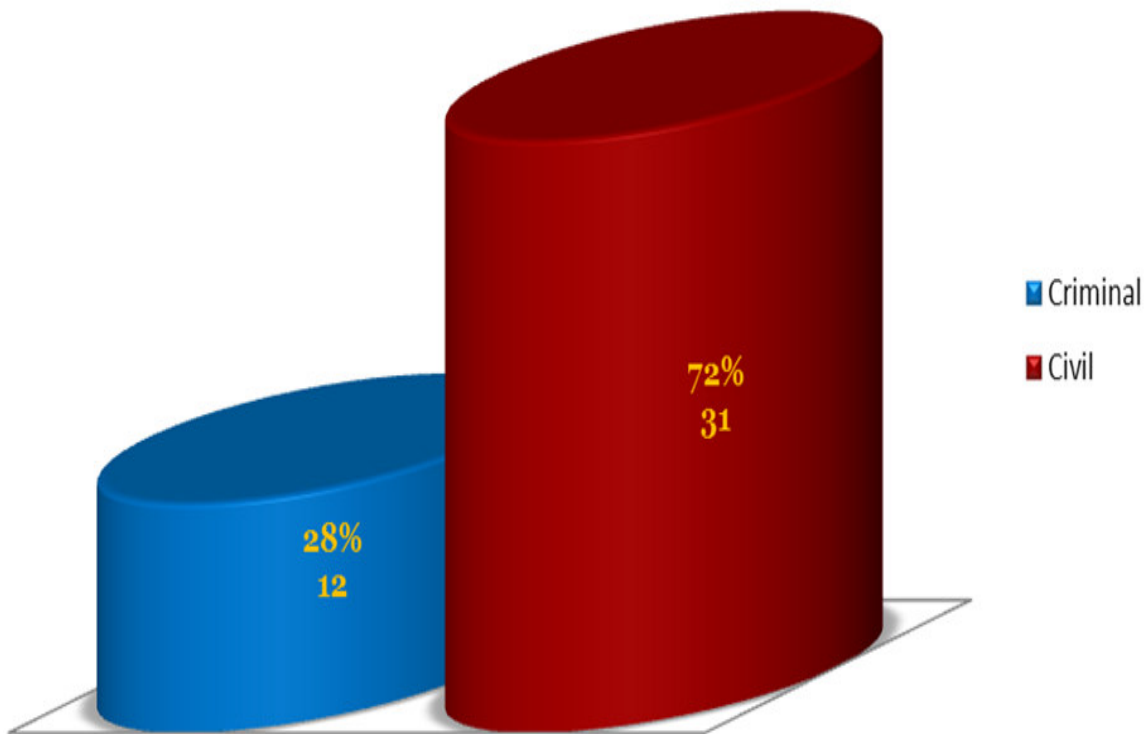




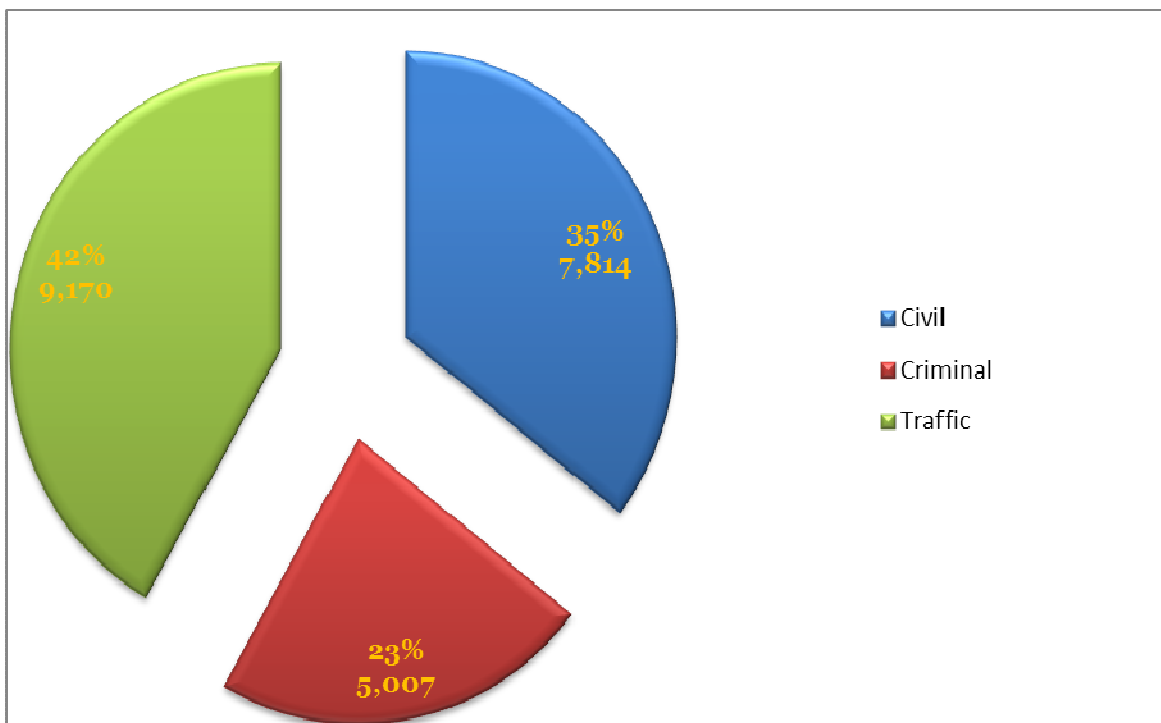
## STATE COURT CASELOAD continued



### Appeals Caseload Management



### Pending Workload Management



# SUPERIOR & STATE COURT ADMINISTRATION



Court Administration is the agency charged with developing policies for improving the efficiency and accessibility of the Clayton County Superior and State Courts.

## **Our Mission**

Court Administration provides judicial support, customer service, and case management for the Superior and State Courts of Clayton County.

## **Our Vision**

The vision of the Court Administration Office is to anticipate judicial needs, create programs based on “best practices”, and implement performance standards for effective court management.

## **Function**

The Court Administration Office observes the daily operations of the Court and recommends enhancement services for the public– a mission that has been executed with great success in recent years. In achieving consistent progression, Court Administration reinforces the Courts’ commitment to manage resources strategically in order to render fair and timely service, providing equal access to justice for all interested patrons. Court Administration is also home to the Clayton County Law Library and various legal authorities, which are used by judicial staff and the general public.

For the most up to date information regarding the Harold R. Banke Justice Center, please visit us at <http://www.co.clayton.ga.us/courts.htm>. Our website also provides links to Georgia Legal Aid, Georgia Administrative Office of the Courts, Clayton County Sheriff’s Office, Georgia Department of Driver Services, and National Center for State Courts. Patrons may also view the Bench and Beyond, the court’s quarterly newsletter, as well as the Annual Report. Our website also entails information concerning the following:

- Judicial calendars;
- Directory listings;
- Updated revisions of the Official Code of Georgia and the Official Code of Clayton County;
- Fee information and online payment options;
- Certified Interpreter scheduling,
- Directions to the Justice Center, and
- Observed holidays and other closings

## **SUPERIOR & STATE COURT ADMINISTRATION continued**



The Clayton County Superior and State Court Administration Office provides vital services as liaison between the Courts, external government agencies, and the general public. Our services include:

- Budget and Financial Management
- Personnel Services
- Purchasing and Contracting
- Research and Development
- Courthouse Security
- Law Library
- Process Servers
- Court Language Interpreters
- Specialized Accountability Courts
- Alternative Dispute Resolution, and
- Courthouse Information Technology

### **CORE VALUES**

#### **Integrity**

Our office remains honest, impartial, and reflective of the utmost morality vested by public trust.

#### **Service**

Our office is steadfastly ethical, transparent, anticipatory of patron needs, responsive to addressed concerns, and personally committed to superior customer service.

#### **Quality**

We persevere in achieving vital court services to exceed customer requirements.

#### **Teamwork**

We support unified efforts in contributing to the decision making and problem solving processes to achieve desired business results.

#### **Development**

Our office environment positively responds to the needs of Clayton County, advances professional growth, and inspires personal commitment.

### **PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT**

As the Court Administration Office maintains transparency and accountability in our servitude to Clayton County, performance standards are measured on a continuous basis in order to track progress and assess the needs of the Courts. Our self-analysis promotes public confidence as we interface with the public on a daily basis and serve each patron with individualized customer care. By measuring performance on a continuous basis, our office turns complex court data and expressed client concerns into solutions that directly address the needs of our patrons. Because statistical data maintenance is critical due to its analogous references to financial management, we are dedicated to strategically allotting available resources as we maintain integrity and accountability.

## COURT ADMINISTRATION DEPARTMENTS



**SUPERIOR AND STATE COURT SECURITY BAILIFF'S PROGRAM**– Under the supervision of Gary Higgins, Chief Court Orderly Officer, the Justice Center's Security staff maintains 40 full time staff members. The program is responsible for coordinating all security initiatives in the Harold R. Banke Justice Center, including executing policies and standard operating procedures for safety and implementing emergency response measures.



**LAW LIBRARY**– Under the direction of Court Administrator, Matt Sorensen, the Clayton County Law Library maintains hard copy and online reference materials covering Georgia and Federal legal practice areas. The self-help facility also provides free access to our own online legal research program, Court and Community Access Program (CCAP), and various non-legal resources, including the Internet and word processing programs. The library is utilized by the judicial staff, practicing attorneys, pro-se defendants, and the general public.



**PROCESS SERVERS**– Process Servers Program falls under the management of the Law Library and entails a streamlined process of annual screening, requiring that each petitioner submit to a criminal background check for transparency and accountability purposes. This process allows the Courts to save time by issuing a single annual judicial order of appointees. For more information, please visit [http://www.co.clayton.ga.us/court\\_administrator/permProcessSvrs.htm](http://www.co.clayton.ga.us/court_administrator/permProcessSvrs.htm) or the Court Administrator's Office at the Harold R. Banke Justice Center.



**COURT TOURS AND YOUTH OUTREACH**– Educational and youth organizations are invited to tour the Courthouse, meet with judges, view administrative and prosecutorial offices, and observe limited designations of the jail during regular business hours. Students are taught the judicial process, legal terms, and roles and functions of members in the courtroom, including the judge, court reporter, bailiff, deputy, interpreter, court clerk, witness, jury, prosecutor, and defendant. During 2010, approximately 500 students ranging from second graders to college scholars toured the Justice Center with Court Administration staff. Institutions served include Clayton College and State University, ITT Tech, Eddie White Academy, Jonesboro High School, Sequoyah Middle School, and Rivers Edge Elementary.

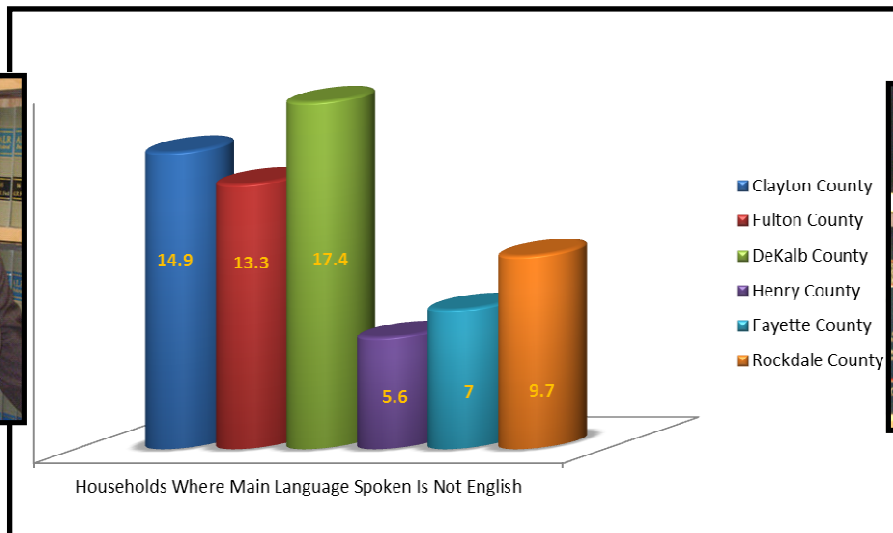
# COURT LANGUAGE INTERPRETERS PROGRAM



In compliance with Georgia law requirements, the Clayton County Court Administration Office manages the Courts' Language Interpreters Program for non-English speaking and hearing impaired defendants, enabling patrons to be served by state certified interpreters in their native languages. Court Administration allows registered patrons to schedule interpreters as needed via our website. Two on-staff Spanish Interpreters are retained, Deyanira Bermudez and Jartu Toles, to accommodate our growing Hispanic community. During 2010, interpreters served in 708 cases, billed more than 1,552.75 hours, and dedicated \$92,042.58 of their expertise to eligible patrons. With diversifying demographics, the Harold R. Banke Justice Center duly notes the trends in languages requested each year: in the calendar year, the list of languages utilized in our facility has diversified from 17 languages in 2009 to 26 languages in 2010.



Deyanira Bermudez



Jartu Toles

INTERPRETER LANGUAGES UTILIZED				
• Arabic	• Gio	• Lao	• Sign Language	• Vietnamese
• Bulgarian	• Haitian	• Mandarin	• Spanish	• Wolof
• Creole	• Hindi	• Oromo	• Swahili	
• Farsi	• Hmong	• Portuguese	• Tagalog	
• French	• Khmer	• Russian	• Telegu	
• German	• Korean	• Serbian	• Turkish	

For further information on scheduling an interpreter, please contact Betty Jo McConnell at 770-477-3414.



## ACCOUNTABILITY COURTS: Adult Felony Drug Court



Picture on the Left:

Front Row: photographed from left to right: Stacy Johnson, Probation Officer; Dr. Millard Hall, Treatment Provider; Tiffany Boulware, Esq., Prosecutor; Ashley Palmer, Esq., Public Defender; Raquel Gonzalez, Coordinator; Captain Steve Gavel, Clayton County Sheriff's Office; and, Tarra Lawrence, Probation Officer.

Back Row: Honorable Albert B. Collier, Presiding Judge

Picture on the Right:

Dr. Samuel Maddox, Clayton College and State University, Evaluations Consultant

The Clayton County Adult Felony Drug Court was implemented in 2008 in response to the mounting caseload attributable to addiction driven crimes not covered by DUI/Drug Court. During the calendar year, the program sustained the case management and sobriety of 25 participants. As the 18 month program anticipates its initial graduation ceremony in June 2011, additional accomplishments include:

- 85% of participants not incurring sequential charges
- 80% of participants not being rearrested while enrolled in the program
- Phase II and Phase III participants contributing to the community by participating in a Community Give Back Day with Clayton County Water Authority, cleaning debris and garbage from various local water resources throughout the county

An additional goal of the program is to enhance each participant's ability to function in the community without committing crimes in violation of the Georgia Controlled Substance Act (VGCSA) or other offenses associated with drug dependency (i.e. forgery, theft, etc.). Pursuant to this goal, all program participants are referred for GED classes, when applicable, and job readiness courses.

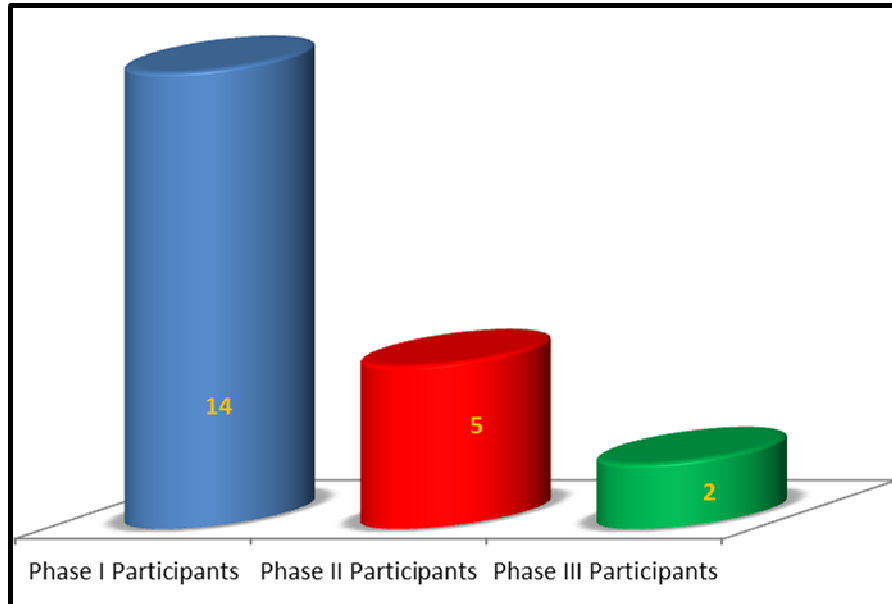
*For further information regarding the Adult Felony Drug Court program, please contact Raquel Gonzalez at 770-472-4309.*



# ACCOUNTABILITY COURTS: Adult Felony Drug Court continued

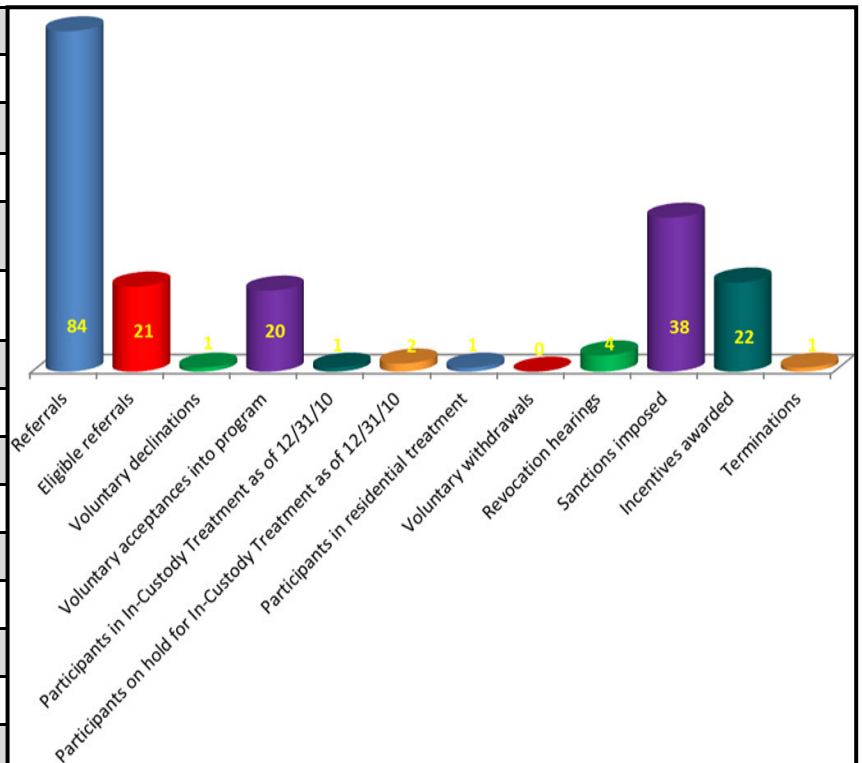


## End of Year Status Snapshot



## Case Flow Management

Referrals	84
Eligible referrals	21
Voluntary declinations	1
Voluntary acceptances into program	20
Participants in In-Custody Treatment as of 12/31/10	1
Participants on hold for In-Custody Treatment as of 12/31/10	2
Participants in residential treatment	1
Voluntary withdrawals	0
Revocation hearings	4
Sanctions imposed	38
Incentives awarded	22
Terminations	1
Phase I participants as of 12/31/10	14
Phase II participants as of 12/31/10	5
Phase III participants as of 12/31/10	2



## ACCOUNTABILITY COURTS: DUI/ Drug Court



Photographed from left to right: Dr. Richard Highland, Treatment Provider; Ms. Sacha Greene, Probation Officer; Greg Porter, Chief of Clayton County Police Department; Judge Linda Cowen, Presiding Judge; and Mrs. Katrina Hood, Coordinator.

\* In support of the DUI/ Drug Court Program, Police Chief Porter oversees the home surveillance component.

**Clayton County State Court's DUI/ Drug Court Program** is a mandatory four phase intervention program for adults with multiple convictions for DUI or drug offenses. It is a collaborative effort between the State Court, Solicitor General's Office, defense attorneys, law enforcement agencies, probation, and drug treatment professionals. Participants are required to appear frequently before Judge Cowen, submit to random drug testing, and undergo specialized group and individual counseling. The Court combines police supervision and accountability standards with effective and intensive treatment, drastically reducing the number of repeat offenses. Since the program's implementation in 2006, no graduate has committed a sequential DUI violation. The success of the program is attributable to teaching participants to cope with stressors, show respect for authority figures, and commit to a lifestyle of sobriety. Program sustainability is partially due to grant funds: 1) an award from Georgia's Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) for \$24,118 (7/1/10—6/30/11), 2) subsidy from CJCC for \$20,000 (1/1/10—12/31/12), and 3) a separate AOC reward for \$17,185, which expired 6/30/10.

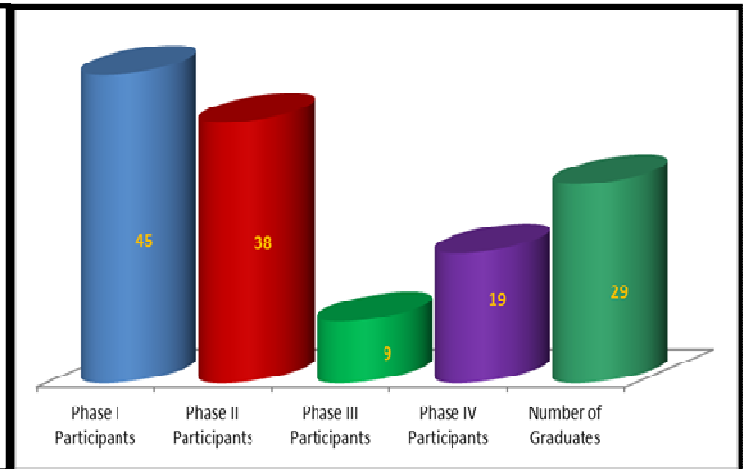
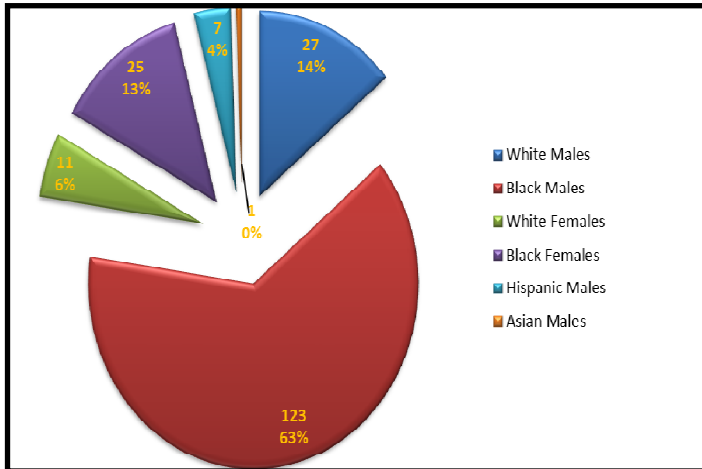
*For further information regarding DUI/Drug Court, please contact Katrina Hood at 770-603-4043.*

# ACCOUNTABILITY COURTS: DUI/ Drug Court continued



## Program Demographics

## End of Year Status Snapshot



## Case Flow Management

The Clayton County DUI/Drug Court Program held 4 graduation ceremonies during the calendar year and managed 194 participants. Participants completed 12,919.30 hours in community service to Clayton County and paid a total of \$43,025.92 in fines.

Successful program completion without graduation (expired sentence)	6
Participant deaths during program enrollment	1
Terminations/ revocations for noncompliance	32
Terminations/ revocations due to AWOL	13
Terminations/ revocations due to noncompliance (new charge of drug possession, failure to use headlights, and failure to use child restraint)	2
Terminations/revocations due to additional charges (5 for driving on suspended license, 1 simple battery, 1 pedestrian under the influence, and 1 violation of limited driving permit)	8
Incentives awarded	269
Sanctions imposed	235
AA meetings attended by participants	5,663
Drug screens administered	4,017
Positive drug screen results (alcohol- 53, cocaine-14, narcotics-9)	76
Total fees collected	\$189,218.97
Cost per participant in treatment	\$150

# ALTERNATIVE DISPUTE RESOLUTION



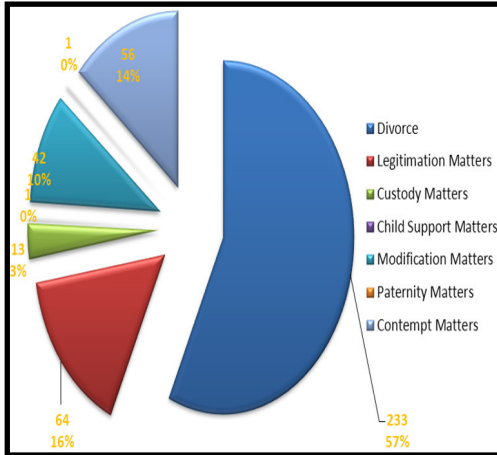
Photographed from left to right: Nancy Parkhouse, Director; Janey Tubbleville, Program Assistant; and Sheila Williams, Special Programs Coordinator.

The Clayton County ADR program offers alternative solutions to expensive and time-consuming litigation procedures where interested parties are afforded viable solutions to resolve legal disputes efficiently and at a lower cost than offered in normal courtroom settings. Our ADR program has proven its ability to save time and money for the Court and the parties involved. Without it, court resources would be further strained as the Justice Center manages mounting caseloads.

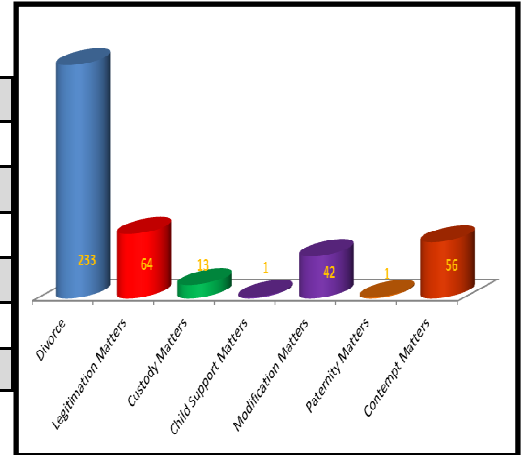
## Case Flow Management

Number of Divorcing Parents Seminars Conducted	22
Attendees	779
Dispositions	1093
Partial Agreements Reached	72
Full Agreements Reached	270
Pending Matters	404
Domestic Disposals	834
Non-Domestic Disposals	259
Active Mediators	25
Matters Dismissed Prior to Mediation	132
Participants Failing to Appear	27
Number Released from ADR Requirement	143
Number of Mediations without Agreements	281
Settlements Prior to Mediation	72
Number of Divorces	233
Number of Matters with Fees Waived	68
Number of Matters Where Both Parties Paid	269
Number of Matters Held at Parties' Request	70
Number of Matters Pending Fee Payment	4
Cases with an Out of State Party Waiting to Set	67
Pro Bono Cases	11

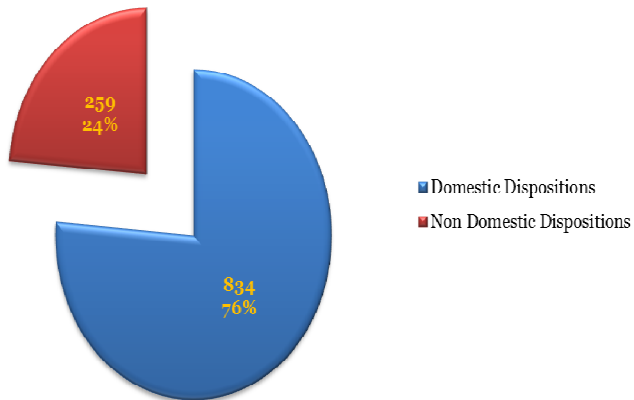
# ALTERNATIVE DISPUTE RESOLUTION (continued)



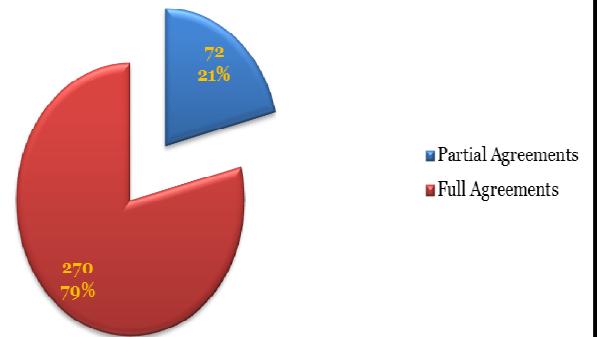
Divorce	233
Legitimation Matters	64
Custody Matters	13
Child Support Matters	1
Modification Matters	42
Paternity Matters	1
Contempt Matters	56



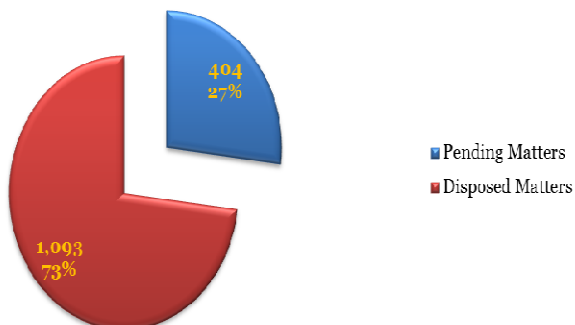
Domestic Dispositions vs. Non Domestic Dispositions



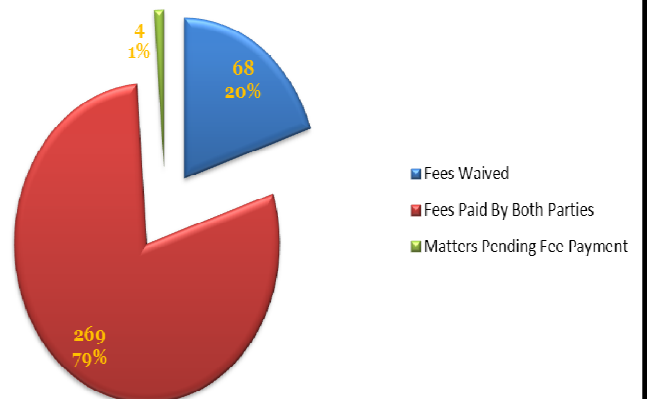
Partial Agreements vs. Full Agreements



Pending Matters vs. Disposed Matters



Payments

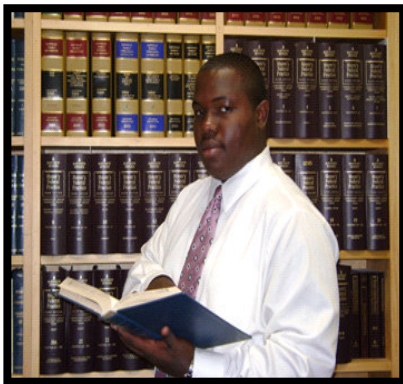




## SUPERIOR AND STATE COURT AMBASSADOR'S INTERN PROGRAM



Court Administration is committed to reaching out into our youth community. In developing partnerships with Georgia Tech, Clayton State University, and various other institutions, the Ambassador's Intern Program allows students to work as interns for the Court. They assist in professional disciplines including legal, technological, and administrative fields via Information Technology, Program Research and Development, and the Law Library. Interns are volunteers and are selected through an interview process, gaining hands-on insight into the daily functions of the Court Administration Office.



Charance Wright, a sophomore from Solid Rock Academy, assisted with the daily operation of the Department of Court Program Services and the Law Library during his internship.

"Working in the Court House has been a great and loving experience. Everyday brings me something new and exciting to work on. Working at the court house has advanced my people skills. I have learned so many different things, I learned the do's and don'ts to do in an interview, the appropriate attire to wear in the business world, and the different law positions in a court room. This internship means so much to me. I have bonded with my coworkers and especially my two bosses, Ms. Ashley Arnold and Ms. Yolanda Lewis. They took me in as if I were their own. In my opinion if you work in a place where you are surrounded with loving, funny, helpful, and hard working people, then anyone would love to work at Court Administration in Clayton County Superior Court."

- Charance Wright, age 16

Jasmine Battle, a graduate of Tuskegee University, assisted the Information Technology Department during the 2010 calendar year. With a B.S. in Computer Science, she worked to enhance the county website and develop the new Receipts Management System for the Law Library.





## JUDICIAL ASSISTANCE 2010



Because the work of the Courts never cease, our Senior Judge Program assists our judicial bench in the event that a judge needs to take a medical, emergency, or annual leave of absence from the bench. Also, as the Harold R. Banke Justice Center manages ever increasing workloads, programs, and customer service needs, Court Administration maximizes available resources to alleviate individual pressures demanded of our staff by utilizing the expertise of these Senior Judges. We extend our most sincere gratitude to participants of this program during calendar year 2010. Thank you for your continued support of our court system.

### **Superior Court**

#### **The Hon. William H. Ison:**

Sr. Superior Court Judge & former Chief Judge of Clayton Superior Court  
Alumnus of John Marshall School of Law

#### **The Hon. Christopher Edwards:**

Spalding County Superior Court Judge, Griffin Judicial Circuit  
Alumnus of Nova University, Ft. Lauderdale

#### **The Hon. Ben Miller:**

Judge, Griffin Circuit Juvenile Court  
Alumnus of John Marshall School of Law

#### **The Hon. Steve Teske:**

Judge, Clayton County Juvenile Court  
Alumnus of Georgia State University

#### **The Hon. Deitra Pleshette Burney-Butler:**

Judge, Clayton County Juvenile Court  
Alumna of University of Denver

### **State Court**

#### **The Hon. T. Michael Martin:**

Municipal Court Judge, City of Fayetteville  
Alumnus of Atlanta Law School

#### **The Hon. Mathew Robins:**

Former State Court Senior Judge of DeKalb County  
Alumnus of Emory University School of Law

#### **The Hon. William W. West:**

Judge, Municipal Court for the City of Jonesboro  
Alumnus of Atlanta Law School

#### **The Hon. Ronald J. Freeman:**

Judge, Municipal Court for the City of Riverdale  
Alumnus of Georgia State University

## COURT CULTURE



In 2010, the Court Administration Office of the Harold R. Banke Justice Center persevered in its mission to improve judicial outcomes and enhance services for court patrons. The entire court staff remains unified in efforts to deliver services anticipatory and in response to serving our community. With various outreach programs and employee service milestones, the citizens of Clayton County can remain assured that the Court is dedicated in continuing our rich tradition of providing accessible, fair, and impartial justice. Additionally, in compiling this Annual Report, we would like to extend a special thanks to offices who assisted in gathering information, including our Judges, Superior Court Clerk's Office, State Court Clerk's Office, Police Department of Clayton County, DUI Court, Drug Court, Alternative Dispute Resolution, and Court Administration staff.

### COMMUNITY OUTREACH



During the calendar year, court employees celebrated the spirit of charity via the "Jeans for Charity" program, which allowed employees to donate funds for the privilege of casual Thursdays. Photographed for raising funds for Komen Atlanta in April 2010, the Superior and Magistrate Courts raised more than \$2,500 for the charity.

### SERVICE ACCLAMATIONS

Court Administration recognizes Linda T. Miller, who served as Clerk of Superior Court for 18 years. After 41 years of service to Clayton County, she retired from elected office on December 30, 2010. Thank you for your service and happy retirement!



Court Administration also recognizes, Karen "Sue" Leary, who retired in July 2010, after 22 years of service as judicial secretary from Clayton County Superior Court. After 20 years of service to Clayton County, she will be dearly missed at the Justice Center. Thank you for your dedication. Happy Retirement!



# COURT ADMINISTRATION DIRECTORY



## Fourth Floor

- Superior Court Judicial Chambers
- Superior Court Courtrooms
- District Attorney's Office and Victim Services (770) 477-3450

## Third Floor

- State Court Judicial Chambers
- State Court Courtrooms
- Superior and State Court Administration (770) 477-3412
- Public Law Library and Attorney Lounge (770) 477-3415
- District Attorney Child Support Division (770) 477-4552

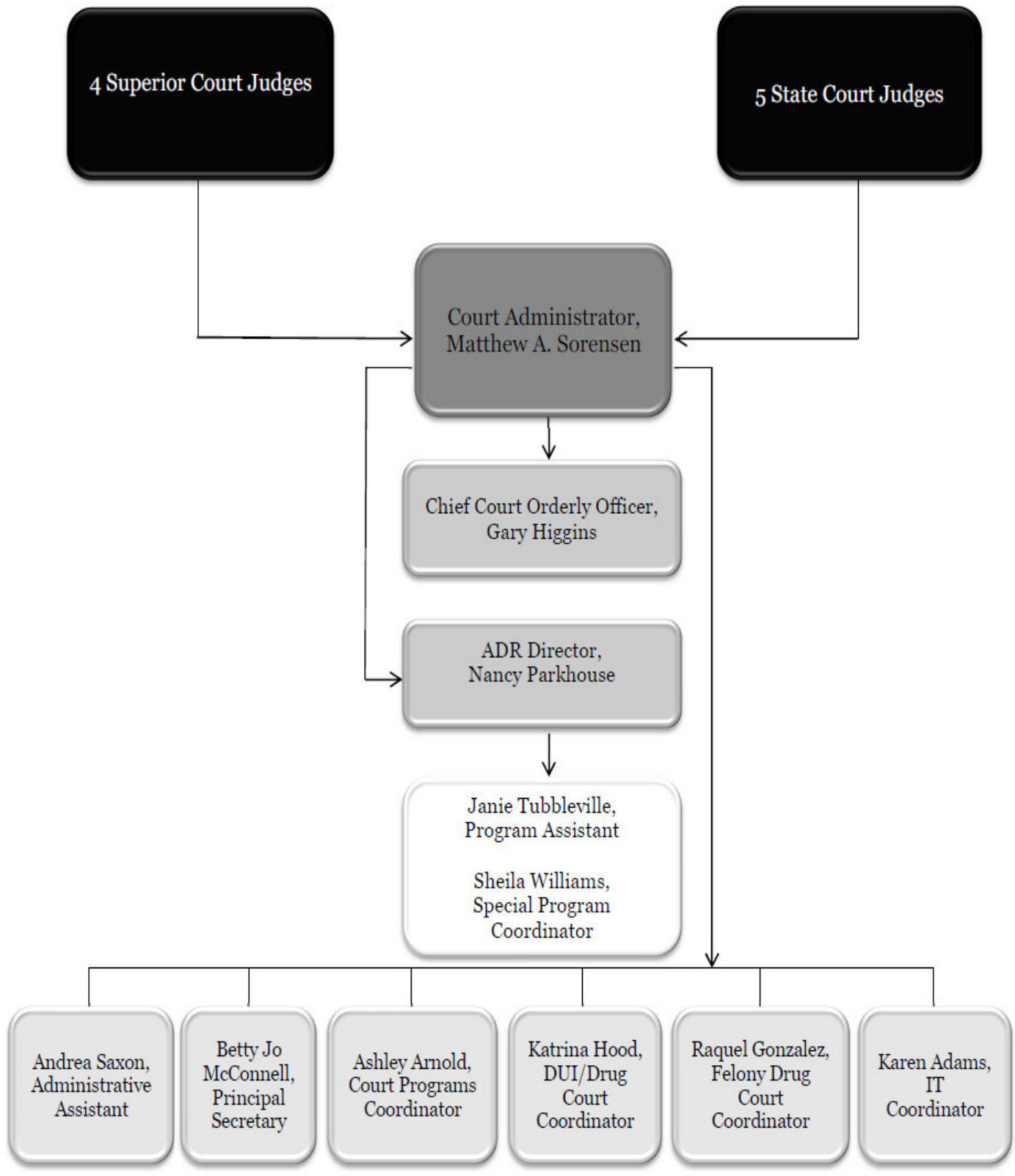
## Second Floor

- Magistrate Court Judicial Chambers
- Traffic Court
- State Court Clerk's Office Traffic Division (770) 477-3386
- Magistrate Court Clerk's Office (770) 477-3443
- Indigent Defense Administration (678) 479-5340
- Alternative Dispute Resolution (770) 477-4575

## First Floor

- Superior Court Clerk's Office:
  - Criminal, Civil & Domestic (770) 477-3405
  - Real Estate (770) 477-3395
  - Deed Division (770) 477-3397
- State Court Clerk's Office (678) 479-5521
- Jury Assembly and Jury Information (770) 477-3400

# 2010 COURT ADMINISTRATION ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



# CLAYTON COUNTY COURT HISTORY



**Augustin Smith Clayton**

November 27, 1783 – June 21, 1839

Augustin Smith Clayton served as Clayton County's first Superior Court judge from 1819-1825 and 1828-1831. A native of Fredericksburg, Virginia, he moved with his family in 1784 to Augusta, Georgia where he attended Richmond Academy and gave a speech for President George Washington. The Honorable Augustin Clayton obtained a Bachelor of Arts from Franklin College in Athens, GA, (currently known as the University of Georgia) in 1804, and sequentially earned admission to the Franklin County Bar in Athens, Georgia in 1806. After 4 years of private practice, Clayton was selected by the legislature in 1810 to compile Georgia Statutes, serving in that capacity from 1810-1812. He then served as clerk for the State House of Representatives from 1813-1815 and for the State Senate in 1826 and 1827. He was elected to the Georgia Senate in 1826 and 1827 and won a special election to fill the remaining term of the resigning Wilson Lumpkin in the United States House of Representatives. Senator Clayton won re-election to a second term in the 1832 election and served until March 3, 1835 when he voluntarily retired and returned to the practice of law in Athens, Georgia. On June 21, 1839, Honorable Augustin Smith Clayton suffered an attack of paralysis and died. He is buried in Oconee Hill Cemetery in Oconee, Georgia. Incorporated from the DeKalb District on November 30, 1858, Clayton County is named for the congressman and former judge.

# CALENDAR YEAR 2010



*The Harold R. Banke Justice Center's Superior and State Court Annual Report summarizes the Courts' achievements during the 2010 calendar year and is compiled by the Court Programs Coordinator of the Clayton County Court Administration Office. For questions and/or concerns regarding information within this report, please contact:*

*Ashley Arnold, Court Programs Coordinator  
Superior and State Court Administration Office  
9151 Tara Boulevard, Suite 3CA01  
Jonesboro, Georgia 30236  
Phone: (770) 477-3412  
Facsimile: (770) 478-2381  
Electronic Mail: [ashley.arnold@co.clayton.ga.us](mailto:ashley.arnold@co.clayton.ga.us)*